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A radio talk by Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through WRC and 44 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, November 12, 1931.

How do you do, Homemakers!

Have all of you heard about the Round the World Book Fair? If not by that enticing name, you know it at least as the annual Children's Book Week. It is a national celebration that begins in just three days, on Sunday, and lasts the whole week, from November 15 through November 21. Some place in your neighborhood, maybe in the school or the community center building, perhaps in the children's department of the church, certainly in the public library, there will be the most fascinating carnival, with festive booths featuring books of many lands. To make this tour around the world as complete as possible for the children, there will be a booth for as many countries as space permits. Just picture for a minute how gay this carnival will be with perhaps a booth decorated to remind us of sunny Italy, another of France, one of India, of colorful Czechoslovakia, and another of the frozen northlands. And of course at the beginning and end of carnival row, or in the middle if it is a circle tour, there will be an all-American, homeland booth, because the trip from land to land through children's books, starts from and winds up at home.

It's a beautiful idea, this plan to introduce our children to the customs, the history, the poetry, and the fiction of other countries, branching out to the most distant points on the globe with interest radiating from a central point, the native land. The possibilities are just endless in this exploration of the delightful fields of children's literature. For even the tiniest tots that might attend a celebration away from home, there will be unusual picture books, and for the youngest readers, fairy tales and folk lore with colorful illustrations. Stories of child life in other countries, biographies, travel books, tales of the doings of world heroes, fiction with an historical background, -- for each sex and every age, beginning with very young childhood and continuing through adolescence, there will be a keen interest in this world book cruise. And this period of international stress is an ideal time to interest children in literature that will give them a sympathetic understanding of other countries.

Perhaps there is no subject that forms a better common meeting place, a greater overlapping of the interests of teachers, parents, and child training specialists than the topic of children's reading. The Child's Bill of Rights of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection embodies the recommendations of the Committee on Reading. The emphasis placed on this subject is not hard to understand when we stop to think that books fill so many needs in the life of the child. For recreation and education alike, they are indispensable. And it is often impossible to separate one of these functions from the other. Think of the travel books, the historical fiction, and the folk lore that instruct while they entertain. But much more subtle in its influence is the effect of the book on the emotional life of the child, on his imagination, his love of adventure, and desire for romance. There are so many excellent volumes to put into the hands of the child that the parent, teacher, friend, relative, or librarian, any of us or at least all of us together, can

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direct the reading interest of every young person into some useful and delightful channel. Because, you see, there is no boy or girl without a reading interest. If you think you know one, choose him or her to be your special guest for this round the world tour during the children's book week, and you will find that it was only necessary to arouse a sleeping interest. Ingenious teachers and librarians have a way, always, of finding out about the reading interests of children who seem to have none, and in stimulating the tiny spark when they find it.

One authority has said that very few books written for children are directly harmful, but oh! so many of them are undesirable. A book may be positively worthless in itself or be so paltry by comparison with really good books, that it has no place either in the permanent library of the child or on his reading list. Stores are full of all kinds of books, good ones mixed in with the poor substitutes for the best in children's literature, and that is why book week is so opportune, coming just at this time of the year when many of us are planning our Christmas shopping lists. I hope that not a single one of you who is listening in will be guilty of making an unwise selection of a child's book this year, whether you are buying it or borrowing it for him. Specialists in education have written books to instruct us in selecting suitable literature for children. Librarians are glad to help us find such reference books. They will also suggest lists of children's books that have been carefully made up with the edition as well as the title of the book given. Sometimes the edition and publisher make all of the difference between a good and a poor book of the same title. An example of the kind of list I mean is called "Two good books a year for my child". Another is the list of those books that were carefully chosen for the library of the Rapidan River School in which President and Mrs. Hoover are interested. The list is available, too, of the books placed in the White House in the spring of 1930, making as a whole a model home library.

If you can find no assistance in book selection close at home, write to the American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, for information that will help you make book lovers of your children through directing their reading.

Goodbye, Homemakers, until Thanksgiving Day!